



News Release

STATE OF MARYLAND

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

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Leadership Changes at Maryland Division of Pretrial Detention and Services

Commissioner, Deputy & Assistant Commissioners for Division and Warden for Baltimore City Detention Center all Named

TOWSON, MD (March 7, 2008)---The Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services announces leadership changes for the Division of Pretrial Detention and Services (DPDS). Howard Ray Jr., who has been serving in an acting capacity, is now officially named Commissioner of the Division, which includes the Baltimore Central Booking and Intake Center, the Baltimore City Detention Centers for men, women, and juveniles, and the Pretrial Release Service Program.

Mr. Ray has a distinguished 34 -year career in corrections which includes vast experience in jobs as diverse as parole and probation agent, warden, hearing officer, and vice president of business development for a correctional industries agency. He has managed large facilities for both male and female offenders, developed and supervised treatment services, and overseen private and state-run prisons. Nearly thirty years of Mr. Ray's career were spent in Oklahoma and the District of Columbia before his appointment as Deputy Commissioner for DPDS here in Maryland. Mr. Ray holds both a Bachelor's and Master's degree from the University of Central Oklahoma.

Named as Deputy Commissioner is seven-year DPDS veteran Benjamin F. Brown, who for the past four years has served as Assistant Commissioner. Mr. Brown, who has 32 years of management experience with State government, non-profits, and private industry, is an American Correctional Association-honored Certified Correctional Executive, and has been honored by the National Institute of Corrections' Leadership Excellence Program. Mr. Brown holds a B.A. from George Mason University and a Master's Degree from William and Mary. He has done additional graduate work in criminal justice and public administration.

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DPDS has also named Renard E. Brooks Assistant Commissioner. Mr. Brooks is a 17-year veteran of DPSCS, and a 23-year veteran of State government, who has experience in correctional compliance issues, dietary management, and teaching. Mr. Brooks holds a Master's of Administrative Science from Johns Hopkins University and a Bachelor of Science from Morgan State University. He spent the period from 1996-2001 at DPDS as Director of Compliance, where he monitored the Division's record on local and national standards. Most recently, Mr. Brooks was the Executive Director of the Maryland Commission on Correctional Standards (a DPSCS agency), which monitors all correctional facilities and home detention services in the State.

Also named to a new leadership post is Otis Merritt III. Mr. Merritt is a 26-year veteran of Maryland corrections who has worked his way up through the ranks from Correctional Officer I. He has been named Warden at the Baltimore City Detention Center. Most recently, Mr. Merritt served as Assistant Warden at the Central Booking and Intake Center. Mr. Merritt has completed many executive-level programs, and has certifications from the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commissions, the National Institute of Corrections, and the Maryland Commission on Correctional Standards.

The Maryland Division of Pretrial Detention and Services has an average daily population of approximately four thousand men and women. Although a few are sentenced individuals, the vast majority are awaiting trial. The Division's population also includes all juveniles charged as adults in Baltimore City.

Baltimore's Central Booking and Intake Center has been hailed for its recent vast improvements to speed the booking process, and is a well-managed facility that is one of the nation's busiest.

The Baltimore City Detention Center includes housing for men and women, with many services and programs for detainees as well. Juvenile offenders go to school daily at the Eager Street Academy.

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